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IN THE CLAIMS

The status of the claims as presently amended is as follows:

1 to 17. (Cancelled)

18. (Currently amended) A portable storage device as claimed in claim 17, wherein said ~~receiving/ejecting operation determining device~~ comprising:

a storage cartridge including a storage medium, a storage medium control device that performs writing of data in said storage medium and reading of data from said storage medium, and a casing that contains said storage medium and said storage medium control device;

a main unit including a receiving and ejecting device that receives said storage cartridge from an outside of said main unit into a predetermined inner position within said main unit, and ejects said storage cartridge out of said main unit from the predetermined inner position, and a storage operation control device that controls storage operation for storing data in said storage cartridge;

a receiving/ejecting operation determining device that determines which of a standby state in which a loading operation for receiving said storage cartridge is awaited, a loading state in which the loading operation is being performed, a loading completed state in which the loading operation has been completed, and an ejecting state in which an ejecting operation for ejecting said storage cartridge is being performed, the operative state of said receiving and ejecting device corresponds to[[.]]; and

an access inhibiting device that inhibits access to said storage medium based on control by said storage operation control device from being gained, when the operative state corresponds to one of the loading state and the ejecting state, ~~said access inhibiting device inhibits the access to said storage medium based on control by said storage operation control device from being gained.~~

19. (Original) A portable storage device as claimed in claim 18, wherein when the operative state of said receiving and ejecting device corresponds to a state other than the loading completed state, said access inhibiting device inhibits the access to said storage medium based on control by said storage operation control device from being gained.

20. (Original) A portable storage device as claimed in claim 18, wherein said access inhibiting device inhibits the access to said storage medium based on control by said storage

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operation control device from being gained, by providing control such that operations are performed in a same manner as in a case where said storage cartridge is actually unloaded, irrespective of whether or not said storage cartridge is physically loaded in said main unit.

21. (Currently amended) A portable storage device as claimed in claim 4718, wherein said access inhibiting device comprises a signal cutoff device that electrically cuts off at least part of electric signals transmitted between said storage operation control device and said storage cartridge.

22. (Original) A portable storage device as claimed in claim 21, wherein said signal cutoff device comprises a semiconductor device.

23. (Currently amended) An electronic information apparatus including the portable storage device as claimed in claim 4718.

24. (Currently amended) A method of controlling a portable storage device, comprising:
a storage medium control step of performing writing of data in a storage medium contained in a storage cartridge and reading of data from the storage medium;

a receiving and ejecting step of causing a receiving and ejecting device to receive the storage cartridge from outside a main unit into a predetermined inner position within the main unit, and eject the storage cartridge out of said main unit from the predetermined inner position;

a storage operation control step of controlling a storage operation for storing data in the storage cartridge;

a receiving/ejecting operation determining step of determining ~~an operative state of the receiving and ejecting device~~ which of a standby state in which a loading operation for receiving said storage cartridge is awaited, a loading state in which the loading operation is being performed, a loading completed state in which the loading operation has been completed, and an ejecting state in which an ejecting operation for ejecting said storage cartridge is being performed, the operative state of said receiving and ejecting device corresponds to; and

an access inhibiting step of inhibiting access to the storage medium based on control in said storage operation control step from being gained, ~~depending on a result of the determination in said receiving/ejecting operation determining step~~ when the operative state corresponds to one of the loading state and the ejecting state.